efforts. If I may inform the House through you, Madam, the whole problem, the basic problem, is one of punctuality. We have a limited rolling stock. If the trains run on time, if punctuality is maintained, the rake is available for maintenance. There is primary maintenance and there is secondary maintenance. If the rake is available for both these maintenances at the originating place and at the terminating point, there will not be much of complaints. Whenever the punctuality goes bad, whenever there is no rake for running the trains, we get into problems. This is how most of the complaints do come. We are facing a serious problem in regard to rolling stock. We generally get the rolling stock from the I.R.F.C. From the time the share market had gone bad, the I.R.F.C. is not able to mobilise any resources. Railway money, I.R.F.C. money, is blocked even with the Canfina which has got into the scam. Therefore, we are facing an acute problem. However, irrespective of all these problems, Madam, we do appreciate the concern of the hon. Members. Our sincere efforts will be there to see that the standards are improved and the travelling public travel with more comfort.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The Minister has said that he has no resources, but he has agreed that there is need for improvement. I do not think there is need to ask any more questions on this because you will get the same answer. Now, Question No. 401-A. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Madam, I have one question. *(Interruptions)*

DR. MURLI MONOHAR JOSHI : My question would be this. If you say you have no resources, why do you continue with it ? There is no need to continue with it. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : If you ask a question, you will get the same answer. Why waste the time of the House ? There are other important questions. *(Interruptions)* Question No. 401-A. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA : If you say it is a general answer, we cannot ask questions of the Railway Ministry hereafterwards.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : He should have a specific answer.

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA : My supplementary is gone.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Most of the supplementaries are gone.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Madam, you should allow more Members. *(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Question No. 401-A. ....*(Interruptions)*...This was shifted from yesterday to today....*(Interruptions)*...Please. The Supplementary List must be with you. There is a separate list which was given, because this question was transferred from yesterday to today. Anyway, he will answer it. The answer is also there.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : Madam, before I answer this, with your permission may I say that this question was thrust upon me only yesterday ? I wish it had come earlier but, nevertheless, I am prepared to answer it.

Protection of Bamboo and Cane Plants

@401-A SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA :†
SHRI RANJAN PRASAD YADAV :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that bamboo and cane, the two plants are intimately associated with the life in the Eastern and North Eastern States and are a potential source of foreign exchange ;

(b) whether it is a fact that highly "vansalochan" a silica product of bamboo used in Ayurvedic and Unani medicines is also a foreign exchange earner;

(c) whether it is a fact that useful domestic furniture and artifacts are produced from these two plants which are liberally exported; and

(d) if so, what steps Government are taking to save these two valuable plants from extinction ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Yes, Sir. However, the potential of bamboo and cane

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@ Previously starred question No. 382, transferred from 24-8-93.

† The question was actually asked on the flower of the house by SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA.

products for earning foreign exchange is rather limited.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir. As per Export Policy 1992—97, there is no restriction on export of artifacts and furniture produced from canes and bamboos.

(d) Government of India have taken following steps to save these plants from extinction :

1. Export-Import Policy, 1992—97 prohibits export of any wild plant including raw bamboo and cane.

2. According to the National Forest Policy, 1988, Natural Forests serve as a gene pool resource and help to maintain ecological balance. Such forests will not therefore, be charfelled for undertaking plantations and for any other activities.

3. Government is giving financial assistance to States and Union Territories Government for raising plantations of minor forest produce including canes and bamboos.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Madam, I wish the Minister's answer was more exhaustive, because this is a very important issue specially bacause, for the common people in the North-East and the northern region and, in fact, for the whole of India and for the people who live in forest areas and also otherwise in rural India, bamboo is a part of their lives. I would like to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that in recent years, the upsurge of industries and the greed to reap benefits quickly and the increased demand for land to grow crops in the forest areas, has set off bamboo and cane destruction very widely——this is part one of my question——and, if so, whether bamboo and cane have versatile economic uses and whether there is a genetic diversity of 50 species of bamboo and about 14 species of cane available in India ? If so, whether a large part of these have been destroyed ? What special effort the Government of India is going to make, because this answer is not very satisfactory that way ?

SHRI KAMAL NATH : Madam, I do not know how I could give an answer to the satisfaction of the Member.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You can try.

SHRI KAMAL NATH : I will try to be as exhaustive as possible. I must say that it is a fact that there is tremendous pressure from agriculture on forest areas and there is pressure of population and development not only on our forests but on our forest areas also. Several steps have been taken in this regard to dispel this pressure. There are various Government schemes which are on. Undoubtedly, not only cane and bamboo, but all forests have a symbiotic relationship with the people of our country, especially those in the interior. It is because of this that we have the National Forest Policy. The chief theme of the National Forest Policy is harmonization of people and forest; it is this involvement of people in our efforts not only in afforestation but also joint forestry management. This is being attempted. It has worked successfully in some areas. It has not been attempted in some areas. But that is the major thrust of our National Forest Policy. Where cane and bamboo are concerned, especially in the North East they are very largely grown. In fact, in Tripura there is a major surplus and there are charges that it is being smuggled into Bangladesh. So we have various schemes, as I have mentioned, and one of the schemes is 100 per cent grant on raising plantations from minor forest produce and large amounts running into crores of rupees have been given out for various projects in this.

With regard to the hon. Member's question on the genetic value of this calamus species to which rattan and cane belong, there are 30 species of genes in this. In Bamboo there are 136 species. Their names are complicated but, nevertheless, there is a genetic value in this, undoubtedly.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Do you think now it is exhaustive ?

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Madam, I am glad the hon. Minister has agreed with my view that these two plants are especially important for our national life environmentally and ecologically. I would like to know what special efforts are being made to increase the production of bamboo and cane in rural areas. Madam, these two products are not only economically useful but they are also edible. For example, in China bamboo and cane shoots are eaten as vegetables. What special efforts are being made to protect these plants from extinction is what I would like to know.

Similarly, Madam, bamboos have a medicinal value also. Its 'vansalochan' has a high calcium value. Various Unani and Ayurvedic medicines are made out of it. So, I would like to know what special efforts are being made to

protect these two plants, especially in rural areas, and also whether any special efforts are being made for their replantation.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Madam, it is a fact that bamboo shoot is edible. One bamboo edible shoot project has been undertaken under FAO project. It is being implemented in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh. This project which we have undertaken, is the first of its kind under FAO. We have got certain plants which are being multiplied. If this project succeeds, we will implement bamboo edible shoot programme in many of the districts in this country, especially in tribal areas and in some of our most backward districts. It gives not only food but an immediate income to the people of that village.

Coming to the question of its medicinal value, 'vansalochan' is a secretion found in curves of various species of bamboos. It is not found in all bamboos, it is found in some of the bamboos. It has a residue of watery substance which, as I said, is found occasionally in the internodes. Its presence in bamboos is generally attracted by the noise when we shake the bamboos. This chalky translucent substance is sometimes transparent and sometimes not. I can give the technical details but I am sure hon. Members won't be interested in them. It does have certain medicinal value. It is useful in the case of asthama cough and such other diseases. It is known to have 99 per cent silica, iron, calcium, alum and alkali. So, it does have medicinal value and it is used for medicinal purposes.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Sarada Mohanty.

Now that is grown in the hon. Minister's district, we must expect some nice bamboo shoot dishes.

SHRI SARADA MOHANTY: I want to know whether there is any proposal to have bamboo plantation in villages, especially in rural areas, because poor villagers use bamboo and cane for construction of their homes. I want to know whether there is any proposal for replantation in village areas.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Madam, there are various projects, forestry projects, and cane and bamboo are part of them. Bamboo, as the hon. Member said, is very important, especially to the rural community. There are many cottage industries and some very small-scale industries which are dependant on bamboo, like those making tent-poles brushes, fans and all other sorts of things. So, there are forestry schemes which include bamboo and cane.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think the next question now. We have had enough on bamboos.

Poteru Irrigation Project

*402. SHRI PRAVAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY† :
SHRI SARADA MOHANTY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the time when Poteru irrigation scheme under Dandakaranya Project for resettlement in the State of Orissa began and what was the original estimated cost;

(b) what is the present estimated cost of the project;

(c) what was the total amount spent on the project by Central Government;

(d) the time since when the Central Government have not given any financial assistance to the Project; and

(e) the time by when the project is expected to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. M. SAYEED): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (e) The Poteru Irrigation Project was approved in December, 1975 at an estimated cost of Rs. 14.81 crores. The presently estimated cost of the Project is Rs. 102.39 crores. Upto December, 1986, the Government of India had released funds to the tune of Rs. 59.69 crores for the implementation of the Project. As no satisfactory reply was forthcoming from the State Government regarding non-completion of works while the cost estimates were progressively being revised upwards, no further funds were released. As per the Action Plan furnished by the Govt. of Orissa alongwith the last revised estimates, the project is now expected to be completed by June, 1996.

SHRI PRAVAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY: Madam, this is an unexpected, casual reply.

† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Pravat Kumar Samantaray.